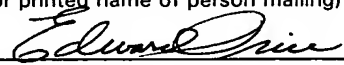


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**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Sir:

Prior to examination, please amend the above-identified patent application as follows:

**Amendments to the Specification** begin on page 3 of this paper.

**Amendments to the Claims** are reflected in the listing of claims which begin on page 6 of this paper.

Manfred GERRESHEIM et al.  
Filed Herewith  
PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

**An Abstract of the Disclosure** begins on page 12 of this paper and is provided on a separate sheet in the Appendix.

**Remarks/Arguments** begin on page 13 of this paper.

An **Appendix** including the Abstract is attached following page 13 of this paper.